



The All Saints University conducts their White Coat Ceremony at Ventanas Del Mar

This past weekend Aruba's two medical schools conducted the honored tradition of awarding a new crop of doctors that have earned their degrees with the white coat that is the emblem of their profession. All Saint's University of Medicine, with a campus in Hato choose an elegant evening in the Ventanas del Mar Restaurant of the Tierra Del Sol Country Club to celebrate the accomplishment of the fifteen students that have earned the title of "Doctor."

The White Coat Ceremony is a tradition begun by Colombia University of New York, with the aim of not only recognizing the enormous feat of earning a degree in medicine, but also to remind and imprint on the new doctors the ethics of the profession. Faculty member Dr. Oscar Zeitvogel, who earned his white coat from All Saints last spring, made the welcome address. Peter Campbell acted as Master of Ceremonies for the evening, and the guest Keynote Speaker was Dr. Casper Wever of Aruba. Dr. Wever is an Ear, Nose, and Throat Specialist, who also performs plastic surgery. His background was particularly pertinent to the issue of the White Coat Ceremony as he is also a self-professed student of Philosophy, and he revealed that most of what he has published is on that subject, and that he "still has a great passion for Philosophy."

Dr. Casper's presentation examined the perception of a clinical doctor in the past and today, and how it has changed over the years, not only for the doctors, but also by their patients. Though he personally did not experience a "White Coat Ceremony" because of his European education, he felt it was a very worthwhile practice. "We do not have this in Europe," he informed the students, "this ceremony marking the transition from theoretical to clinical medicine... but it is quite a good thing, as it is a major transition in your life, and things will never be the same again."

Dr. Casper recommended to the gathering a book by Harvard psychiatrist Dr. Samuel Shem, titled "House of God." He felt that it should be required reading for all new and aspiring doctors. "This is a landmark book," he explained, describing the experience of what happens to new doctors when they "enter into this world of white coats... You are making the transition from this world as an outsider to an insider." Dr. Casper felt that it was required reading, as Dr. Shem discovered that the world of clinical medicine was very different from what he expected it to be, and his depiction of his experiences will help prepare students for the realities of actually practicing medicine.

Additionally addressing the gathering were Student President Bala Gopalakrishnan, who reminisced with the student about their experiences together, and exhorted them to exercise compassion in the practice of their profession. The new doctors then donned their white coats with the assistance of various faculty members and Dr. Tejas Patel administered the Hippocratic Oath.

The class of December 2006 valedictorian was Mario Ranjeevan, who thanked the faculty for their support and inspiration, and declared that if he learned any one thing, it was that "anything short of excellence shall be deemed unacceptable."

Dean of Students Dr. Lakhinder Kanwar made the closing remarks, noting the broad diversity and success rate of their student doctors, far above what is the norm. He revealed a personal knowledge of each of his students, recalling their various characteristics through humorous anecdotes. He reminded many of them that may very likely choose to practice medicine in what is considered Third World Countries that their "biggest challenges will be dealing with limited resources." He exhorted them "to try and help people, not only in your country, but around the world... and to stand tall and be proud of where you come from." He finally offered them the sage advice to "approach these next two years (of clinical rotations) one day at a time. Enjoy and learn what you can each day."

The evening ended with a well-earned celebration by all the students of the school, where everyone relaxed and enjoyed a fabulous meal from the Ventanas Del Mar culinary department. The motto of the All Saint's University is "Dedication, Perseverance, Intelligence... Your Strengths, ASUM's Pride." All of the student body and faculty of the school were visibly proud of their graduates that night. The News offers their congratulations to the new doctors of the All Saint's University School of Medicine.